LEO BURNETT COMPANY, *Inc.*

Ad No. 1483—Req. No. 23246—2-3 page—B&W—4¼ x 10 in.—{Scholastic / Teen / Planner}—October 22, 1962 (B-

Column No. 5

Printed in U.S.A.

On Campus with Max Shulman

(Author of "I Was a Teen-age Dwarf", "The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis", etc.)

HIGH TEST, LOW TEST, NO TEST

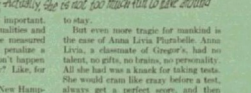
Just the other night I was saying to the little woman, "Do you think the importance of tests in American colleges is being overemphasized?" (The little woman, incidentally, is not, as you might think, my wife. My wife is far from a little woman. She is, in fact, almost seven feet high and heavily muscled. She is a full-blooded Chirichua Apache and holds the world's hammer-throw record. The little woman I referred to is someone we found crouching under the sofa when we moved into our apartment several years ago, and there she has remained ever since. She never speaks, except to make a kind of guttural clicking sound when she is hungry. Actually, she is not too much fun to have around, but with my wife away at track meets most of the time, at least it gives me somebody to talk to.)

But I digress. "Do you think the importance of tests in American colleges is being overemphasized?" I said the other night to the little woman, and then I said, "Yes, Max, I do think the importance of tests in American colleges is being overemphasized." (As I have explained, the little woman does not speak, so when we have conversations, I am forced to do both parts.)

To get back to tests—sure, they're important, but let's not allow them to get *too* important. There are, after all, many qualities and talents that simply can't be measured by quizzes. Is it right to penalize a gifted student whose gifts don't happen to be of the academic variety? Like, for instance, Gregor Sigafoos?

Gregor, a freshman at the New Hampshire College of Tanning and Belles Lettres, has never passed a single test; yet all who know him agree that he is studded with talent like a ham with cloves. He can, for example, sleep standing up. He can do a perfect imitation of a scarlet tanager. (I don't mean just do the bird calls. I mean he can fly South in the winter.) He can pick up B-B's with his toes. He can say "Toy boat" three times fast. He can build a rude telephone out of two empty Marlboro packs and 100 yards of lumberjack's twine. (Of all his impressive accomplishments, this last is the one Gregor likes to do best—not building the telephone, but emptying the Marlboro packs. Gregor doesn't just dump the Marlboros out of the pack. He smokes them one at a time—settling back, getting comfortable, savoring each tasty puff. As Gregor often says with a winsome smile, "By George, the makers of Marlboro took their time finding this fine flavor, this great filter, and by George, I'm going to take my time enjoying 'em!")

Well, sir, there you have Gregor Sigafoos—artist, humanist, philosopher, Marlboro smoker, and freshman since 1939. Will the world—so desperately in need of talent—ever benefit from Gregor's great gifts? Alas, no. He is in college to stay.



But even more tragic for mankind is the case of Anna Livia Pratchelle. Anna Livia, a classmate of Gregor's, had no talent, no gifts, no brains, no personality. All she had was a knack for taking tests. She would cram like crazy before a test, always get a perfect score, and then promptly forget everything she had learned. Naturally, she graduated with highest honors and degrees by the dozen, but the sad fact is that she left college no more educated, no more prepared to cope with the world, than when she entered. Today, a broken woman, she crouches under my sofa.

© 1962 Max Shulman

* * *

And speaking of tests, we makers of Marlboro put our cigarette through an impressive number before we send it to the market. But ultimately, there is only one test that counts: Do YOU like it? We think you will.

Source: https://www.industrydocuments.ucsf.edu/docs/2061033981

2061033981